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Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 MCE-00 ACDA-12 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00
/064 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5341
INFO SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 2221

SECDEF FOR ISA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, JO, US
SUBJECT: JORDANIAN TANKS

REF: A) STATE 051550, B) AMMAN 0994, C) AMMAN 0812

1. FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY COMMENTS ON QUESTIONS POSED IN PARA 3 REF A, AND ARE KEYED TO SAME:

A. AS DEPT ALREADY AWARE, JORDAN ARMED FORCES (JAF) HAVE BEEN PLANNING FOR SOME TIME TO MODERNIZE ITS TANK FLEET. JAF PLANS TO HAVE ITS M48 TANKS CONVERTED TO THE MORE MODERN M48A5 VERSION IN IRAN. AT THE SAME TIME JAF WANTS TO MODERNIZE ITS FLEET OF SOME 287 CENTURIONS. HOWEVER, BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH THE LATTER, JAF WANTS TO MAKE A COST EFFECTIVENESS STUDY OF MODERNIZING ITS CENTURION VERSUS REPLACING THEM WITH EITHER THE M60 OR M48A5 TANK, OR A MIXTURE OF THE TWO. IN ORDER TO MAKE SUCH A COST EFFECTIVENESS STUDY JAF NEEDS THE PRICES OF BOTH THE M48A5 AND THE M60A1.

B. THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF TANKS WHICH JORDAN MIGHT WISH TO PURCHASE IF ITS COST EFFECTIVENESS STUDY SHOULD SO INDICATE WOULD BE IN THE RANGE OF 287, AS INDICATED IN PARA 4(D) OF REF B. THIS PRESUPPOSES, OF COURSE, THAT JORDAN CAN OBTAIN THE NECESSARY FINANCING. THE POSSIBILITY ALSO EXISTS THAT JORDAN

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MIGHT DECIDE TO PURCHASE A LESSER NUMBER OF TANKS, OR NONE AT ALL.

C. REPLACEMENT OF THE CENTURIONS WITH M48A5'S OR M60A1'S SHOULD NOT DISTURB THE BALANCE OF FORCES IN THE AREA. JORDAN'S NEIGHBORS, INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY, HAVE GREATER NUMBER OF TANKS WITH GUNS OF 105MM OR LARGER CALIBER THAN DOES JORDAN. THE M48A5 TANK WILL BE IN THE JAF INVENTORY WHEN THE MODERN-

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IZATION OF JORDANIAN M48'S IS ACCOMPLIHSHED BY IRAN; THE M60A1 IS ALREADY IN THE JAF INVENTORY. REPLACEMENT OF THE CENTURION WITH US TANKS WOULD SIMPLIFY JAF TRAINING, MAINTENANCE AND LOGISTICAL REQUIREMENTS.

D. AMEMBASSY AMMAN'S ANALYSIS OF THE REQUEST IS AS FOLLOWS: JAF HAS MADE THE REQUEST FOR P&B DATA ON THE M48A5 AND M60A1 TANKS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE WHICH TANK OR A MIX OF THE TWO WILL BEST MEET THEIR NEEDS AS A REPLACEMENT FOR THEIR OLDER BRITISH CENTURION TANKS, IF MODERNIZATION COSTS FOR THE CENTURION ARE EXCESSIVE, AS JORDAN NOW SUSPECTS. BY REPLACING THEIR CENTUIONS WITH US TANKS THE JAF WILL HAVE STANDARDIZED ON US EQUIPMENT. THE DIESEL POWERED TANKS WILL PROVIDE THE JAF WITH GREATER RANGE OF OPERATIONS BETWEEN REFUELING. BITH THE M48A5 AND M60A1 USE THE 105MM GUN WHICH IS CURRENTLY ON THE BRITISH CENTURION TANKS. THEREFORE, THE SALE OF THE TANKS WILL GIVE THE JAF NO INCREASE IN FIREPOWER. STANDARDIZATION ON US TANKS SHOULD EFFECT ECONOMIES ON SPARE PARTS PURCHASE BY THE JAF. OVERALL, WE VIEW THIS REQUEST BY THE JAF AS SIMPLY A MEANS TO MODERNIZE AND STANDARDIZE THE TANKS IN THE JAF INVENTORY AND EFFECT FUTURE ECONOMIES IN OPERATION AND TRAINING. AMEMBASSY AMMAN RECOMMENDS FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION OF THE REQUESTS FOR P&B. IF POSSIBLE, WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE P&B DATA BASED ON THREE CONFIGURATIONS. FIRST (IF POSSIBLE), P&B BASED ON 287 M48A5S. SECOND, THE MOST FEASIBLE MIX OF M48A5 AND M60A1 TOTALING 287 TANKS IF AVAILABILITY OF M48A5S IS A PROBLEM AND FINALLY, AND OFFER BASED ON 287 M60A1S.

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E. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE JAF WANT THE TANKS TO BE EQUIPPED WITH THE LATEST IMPROVEMENTS, TO INCLUDE STABILIZED GUN AND LASER TANK FIRE CONTROL SYSTEM (LTFCS). SINCE FUNDING WILL BE A PRIME CONSIDERATION, AND WE ARE NOT SURE IF ALL OF THE IMPROVEMENTS SCHEDULED FOR THE M60A3 CAN BE RELEASED TO NON-NATO COUNTRIES, IT IS REQUESTED THAT P&B BE DEVELOPED FOR THE STANDARD US ARMY M48A5 AND M60A1 WITH THE NIGHT VISION EQUIPMENT, RISE ENGINE, AND FULL COMMO CAPABILITY. A SEPARATE P&B SHOULD INCLUDE ALL OF THE ABOVE PLUS LTFCS AND STABILIZED GUN (IF NOT ALREADY STANDARD ON THE M60A1).

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